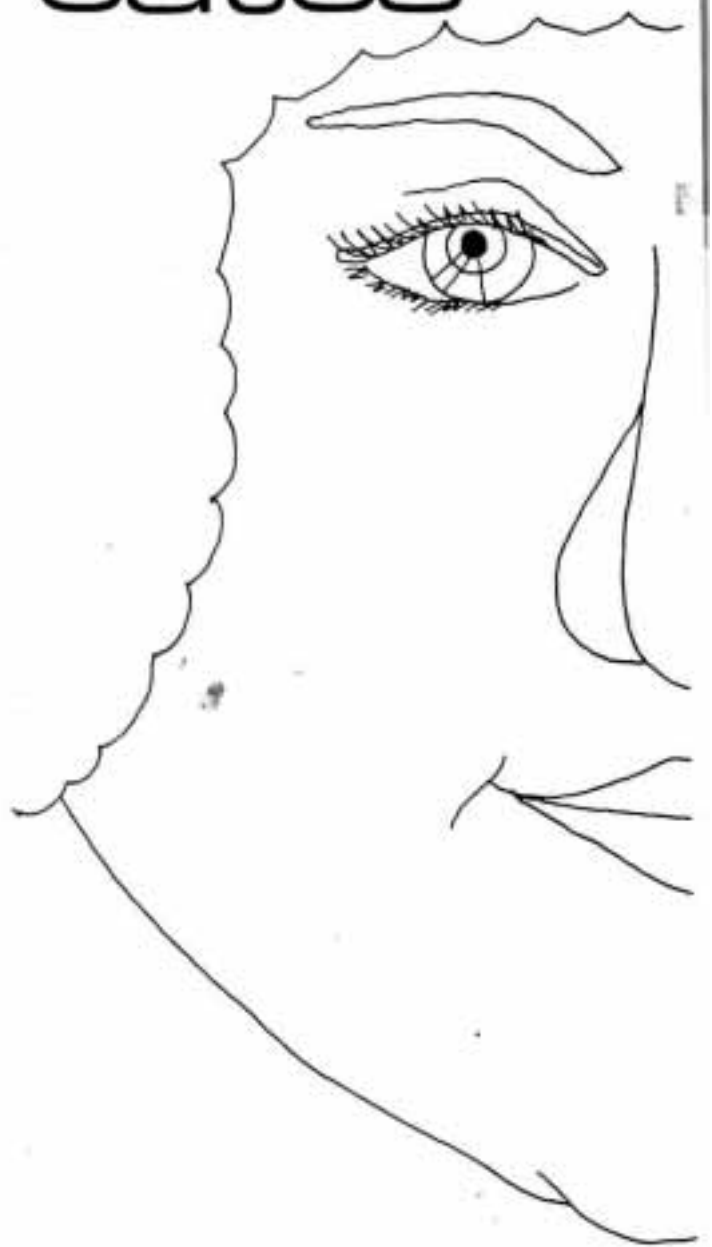


& advocates



The Public Information Coalition (PIC) is a grant program awarded by the Developmental Disabilities Planning and Advisory Council under the Minnesota State Planning Agency. The three sponsoring agencies are Minnesota Association for Retarded Citizens, Minnesota Epilepsy League, and United Cerebral Palsy of Minnesota.

The PIC Project is responsible for producing and coordinating a comprehensive public information program aimed at changing attitudes toward persons who have mental retardation, epilepsy, and cerebral palsy.

Both as individuals and as members of a "minority," persons who have mental retardation, epilepsy, or cerebral palsy (and who in many cases may have multiple handicaps) are discriminated against in such areas as employment, transportation, housing, insurance, and medical services.

The most significant attitude change would occur when persons with handicaps are seen first as PEOPLE and secondly as persons with a handicap...they are, first of all, human beings with abilities and individual personalities.

In interviewing persons with disabilities it was felt that each person has to be treated as an INDIVIDUAL. As stated by one person PIC talked to:

"THE BASIC MISUNDERSTANDING IS WE ARE INDIVIDUALS. WE ARE NOT PEOPLE WITH HANDICAPS LUMPED TOGETHER. WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT. THERE ARE NO TWO PEOPLE ON EARTH WHO ARE ALIKE, AND THAT INCLUDES US! WE ARE ALL INDIVIDUALS...CREATED WITH DIFFERENT LIKES AND DISLIKES...BUT WE ARE ALL PEOPLE."

PIC will carry out two complementary programs to reach the citizens of Minnesota...

1. STATEWIDE ATTITUDINAL CAMPAIGN...to be carried out by the PIC staff. This will include professionally produced public service spot packages for both television and radio; billboards; a series of t.v. & radio programs on the three disabilities; as well as statewide newspaper features on persons with mental retardation, epilepsy, and cerebral palsy.
2. "PROJECT PEOPLE"—a community education program to be implemented statewide, on a regional level, by the Developmental Disabilities Regional Planners, assisted by their public information committees and participants from the three sponsoring agencies in each community. This program will educate groups in each community about the three disabilities. It will be advertised by means of radio/t.v. spots, posters, newspaper articles, and word-of-mouth. Support for this program has been virtually unanimous, and this kind of one-to-one educational program is the only really effective way to educate the public.

But, it's not the only way...that's where YOU come in:

advocacy

IT STARTS WITH EACH OF US

It is very difficult to change attitudes, and it's not something that will happen "overnight." It takes repeated effort on the part of each person who is aware of the need for change.

The main objective of PIC is to change the way people refer to people who have handicaps. We tend to put people into categories, because it's easier to deal with them.

We refer to "the retarded"... "the epileptic victim"... "the CP"... we fail to recognize the PERSON BEHIND THE LABEL.

Our way of speaking affects our way of thinking, which in turn affects our way of acting. And it's hard to change old thought patterns!

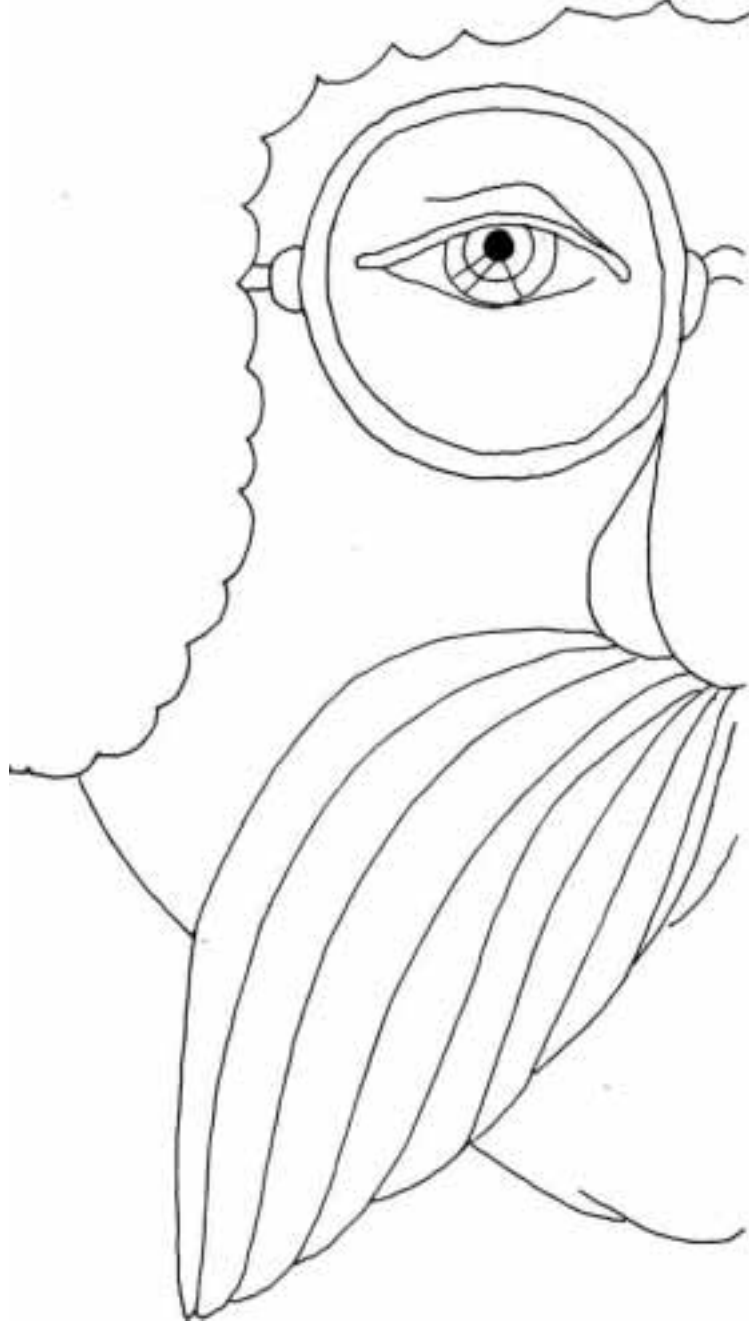
The idea of changing speaking patterns relative to changing attitudes is not new; however, the implementation of "PROJECT PEOPLE" in our Minnesota communities, as well as the cooperation asked of the news media in attempting to change attitudes...is probably one of the largest educational endeavors ever carried out in any state.

It is time to recognize that all people are different from one another; that the terms "mental retardation," "epilepsy," and "cerebral palsy" merely describe one part of a person's individuality...they don't define the whole person!

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CHANGE COMMUNITY ATTITUDES? Begin with yourself, and work outward! If you have made the commitment to think of the person first, before you think of the disability, spread the word, verbally and in writing, to your neighbors, local businesses, legislators, media...there's no magic in it! Any 1 person can be an effective advocate!

| If you know a club or organization in your community that would be interested-in becoming ADVOCATES TO CHANGE ATTITUDES, please have them contact their local "Project People" office in order that a program be presented at one of their meetings. Although brochures will be mailed to key groups in the state, and there will be advertising for "Project ; People"--YOUR OWN PERSONAL ENDORSEMENT OF PROJECT PEOPLE will aid in this community education endeavor. REMEMBER: Attitudes & Advocacy Begins With YOU.'!

attitudes



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